

[Dave E. Burns]

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[Gauthier Sheldon ??]

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Dave E. Burns, 80, living at 3808 [Race?] St. [Fort?] Worth, Texas, was born May 7th, 1857, at [Penock?] (now Paris) Texas, Lamar County. He was reared on a plantation and learned to ride a horse at an early age.

[He?] left home at the age of 13 and came to Fort Worth, and there met Joel Collins, by whom he was hired to work on the Collins ranch located in [?] County.

Burns continued to follow/ the range until 18, at which time he joined the Texas Rangers and served under Captain [McNally?] and took part in the capture of [Sam Bass?], July 19, 1878. He resigned from the ranger force in 1880, and thereafter engaged in farming and cattle buying.

His range story follows:

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"I am now 80, years old, I was born in Lamar County, Texas May 7th, 1857, on a plantation, which my father owned, near a place called [Penock?]. It since has been changed to the name of [Paris?].

"My father owned several good saddle horses, which were used for traveling and riding over the fields, looking after the nigger slaves. I learned to ride when I was six years old and when I reached the age of 13, was a good rider and hossman.

"Plantation life did not sit well with me and after my 13th birthday I hankered for a change and wanted to get into some other line. Kid like, I decided to hunt a job and at the same time see some of the world, so left home without the consent, or knowledge, of my parents. C12- 2/11/41 - Texas

"I made it to Fort Worth, that was in 1870, and there was not much to the city at the time, but was a big cow center. I was hanging around the wagon yard the after I arrived and a man came up to me, he began to chin. After getting me to tell 2 who I was and where from, he sez:

"Are you looking for work?"

"Reck n so", I sez.

"Well, how would you like to work on a ranch?, he asked me.

"Fine", sez I, "and I can ride a hoss.

"That man was Joel Collins, he owned a ranch in Erath, County and there is were we jiggled to. That was in the month of December and I went to work hunting strays as my first job. That gave me time to graduate from a scissor-bill to a rawhide and by spring I was handy with the [rest?] and could throw a mean loop. I also, was handling the hosses like an old timer.

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"When spring arrived Joel began to cut out a herd to drive up Kansas way. I worked in the cut out and shaped up so well that Joel gave me ridding orders to go on the drive. I had been hankering for such and of course was tickled pink.

"We started to drift up the trail in the later part of May and had good luck. It was my first show on a drive and I was soaking in everything and the first to jump at any job that came up and took my turn at night riding, after the critters were bedded down at night. We had about 2000 head and did [not?] lose any. Collins gave a few, sore footed, animals to Indians that called on us for "wohaw", which is the Indian word for beef. I had it put into my conk on that trip, that it was better to give the Indian wohaw, than to have them get it by 3 stampeding the herd. During the drift we hit up with just one bad storm and the herd got the jitters, but we worked fast and we put them to milling without any of the critters getting away, but they kept us dragging all night.

"We arrived at Camp Supply and there Joel met up with Sam Bass. The second day at Camp Supply, Joel called me and sez to me, "I have a good deal in the making and you are just the knid of a buckaroo I want to take in with me." So we [sauntered?] over to where Sam Bass and several other were. The layout offered to me was for me to join up with the gang and go to making 'big money' as they put it, doing anything from rustling cattle to bank robbery. They had an oath that they read to me and I was to swear to it befor I would be accepted. The oath read that a person must accept the orders of the cheif, never tell anyone about plans, never admit doing a job, or tell whom the other members were. Death was the penalty for breaking the oath. I refused to become a member and Joel argued with me for two days trying to get the idea into my conk, but it was a hopeless job, which he finally agreed to and he sez to me "Lad your missing the chance of a life time to make big jack and be able to take it easy". But I could not see it the that way and told him so. I sez to him, sez I, "Joel I am looking for hard work".

"After he seen that I would not join the gang, I and four others were started back to the ranch with 400 hosses that he had traded for. 4 "We started to drift back to the ranch with

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the hosses and made better time, of course, averaging around 15 miles a day, where with cows they must be allowed to graze and drift, so that the average is only seven miles a day. The cattle were always allowed to graze a-plenty. The idea was to deliver the critters in good flesh.

"When we arrived at the [home?] range, I prattled to Joel's wife, I sez to her:

"You'll never see Joel again, he has joined up with Sam Bass and a gang of them are going to stick up banks, trains, rustle cattle and anything that comes their way to make big jack".

"I calculate on haveing him brought in feet first, with his boots on, but he is sit on doing it and has that hankering and I can't stop him." she sez.

"well, he did come home about a month later and had Sam Bass, and several others, with him. They took the top hosses of the ranch, left the worn out mounts, and went off again. That got my bristles [yp?], because we were left with a bunch of second grade hosses and had to work with that kind or bust others, which we did. We worked about a month busting and training hosses that we took out of the herd. We had a pert string in the remuda when Joel, with his buckaroos, showed up and took the tops of the remuda again. That got me plumb riled and I sez to Joel's wife:

"If that happnes again I will take to the [drags'.?]

" I can't help it Dave," she sez, but I wish you would 5 stay. You are one human that I can trust.

"So, I promised that I would stay. I never had any more of the top hosses taken, because they never came back. A couple months after their last visit, Mrs Collins received a letter and it told her that Joel got killed during a stick up of the U P train. A few weeks after a party showed up with money for Joel's wife. It was Joel's share of the loot.

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"I quit the Collins ranch a short time after the word of Joel's death arrived as she was intending to sell. It was the first part of December and I hit the drag for Brownwood. There I met up with Coogins, he run a bank in the town and had ranch. [He?] had tow partners in the cow business. The firm was Cooggins, Crouch and [illy?] and their brand was '3'. Coggins took me/ on and I joined his outfit, which was 25 miles, S W. of Brownwood. The ranch run about 15000 head. There is where I had my first brush with Indians.

"AAfellow named Moody was working at the corral and his hoss was off a piece. I happened to step out of the back door of the bunk house and I saw about 15 Indians, mounted on hosses, trying to cut Moody off from the hoss. It was the hoss they were after. I pronto stepped inside for my rifle and stood in the door and threw five shots of lead at the bunch. They were a little out of my range, and pulled farther away. As it happned Moody and I were the only two that were at the camp just then, so we dare not take after them. The Indians, no doubt, were not sure of our numbers and, also, they were in 6 which was not the place for an Indian to do any "fitting". An Indian always hankers for a place where he can hide and do the "fitting" from ambush. We calculated that they were a party of scouts and that during the night we would be called upon. To be safe, we sent a man to Brownwood to ask for help and a party of rangers came out under Captain Robinson. We cowhands joined them and trailed the Indians, but failed to meet up with any of them. If they were intending to come back they got wind of the rangers and high-tailed it out of the section.

"I next met up with Indians 18 months later. It was in 1876 I joined up with the John Duncan outfit located in [Llano?] County. The ranch was 16 miles E. of Llano. Duncan's brand was 'T 5' made by using the 5 to make [?], thus . He run about 10 thousand head of cattle and 5 thousand head of hosses.

"It was in the summer of 76, that I was hunting strays and [Boy?] Johnson was working with me, he had a small herd running the range. He lived in a cabin on the creek near the Glen Cedar [Breaks?]. [Babs?], his brother lived 150 yards up the creek and Mrs Carwell,

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with tow grandchildren, lived beyond that. The Glen breaks is about 8 miles out of Llano and extends 16 miles to Gap Sandy.

"Boy and I returned from stray hunting, late in the afternoon, and found his wife and 3 month old child gone and signs showed the [work?] of Indians. We went to his brother's cabin and found Bad's wife and 5 month old child gone. Then 7 half mile up the creek we came to the cabin where Mrs Carwell lived with her two grandchildren. [Ceo?] Klick and Mary Carwell, both children were in their tens and the [?] of them were gone. All of the homes had been ramsacked and things destroyed.

"Babs Johnson high-tailed it to notify other cowmen. while Boy and I started on the trail of the skunks. It was not long until we were joined by a good crowd, including Captain Robinson and Arron Moss, with a bunch of rangers. We trailed them and got a good number of the bunch befor they reached the [Pecos?] and there, what was left of them, escaped.

"We found Boy's child at the edge of the cedar break, laying at the side of a rock with its head crushed. On the rock was a spatter of blood, which indicated that they had taken the child by the heelsand swung itshead against the rock, to crush the [child's?] head and they threw it down. The child of Bab's was found a short way farther on with its head cut open, and his wife was found at the far end of the break with an arrow/ head in her breast. The arrow was broken of which showed that she had tried to work the arrow out and it brok of from the twisting she gave it. Mrs Boy Johnson was not found, but we saw small pieces of her apron scattered along the trail, which showed that she was giving us signs of the trail by tearing of bits of her apron, dropping those as she traveled.

"If I ever had any scraples about shooting Indians they were shot when I was saw? that child laying by that rock with its head crushed. To shoot Indians then would tickle my gizzard clear through my innards. 8 It was hard to tell how many Indians there were. They split into several bunches and so did we. It was a running fight, the Indians were trying to

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get away and it was necessary to hunt and chase after them. At Pack Saddle mountain we jumped 16 of them, there were only 8 of us in that bunch, but we made short work of them. The whole 16 were good Indians when we finished our work and it was done without a man being lost out of our crowd. There were a few scratches taken by a few of us, but we had better guns and were the best shots. There were about 35 good Indians accounted for by the various parties of cowhands by the time the skunks hit cross the Pecos.

"The Klick boy turned up at home a few years later. He got the Indians confidence and they made a brave out of him and at the first chance he high-tailed for home. He came home riding a yellow hoss. Mrs Carwell was bought from her captives, a few months later by an Indian trader. He paid her out with a red dress and she was returned to her people. I tried to chin about the matter with her after she returned, but she just did not want to talk about it. She said the sooner she could get the matter off of her mind the better she would like it.

"Shortly after the Glen Cedar Indian raid I quit the Duncan outfit and went to wrangling hosses. I traveled over the Western part of the State busting hosses for different ranches.

"I joined up with the Texas Rangers in September 1877, under the name of Bill Green and served under Captain McNally. 9 "Our work was hunting outlaws in general,,but cattle rustlers where our cheif chief object and we caught up with a lot of them, and also, a good number that me met up with were hanging from the limbs of trees with a rope tied around their neck.

"Sam Bass and his gang were operating heavy at that time and we/ were after him wanting to get the dead wood on him. We were getting orders every little while directing us to be att a certain twon town and lay for the Bass outfit. The riding orders were sent on tips that the outfit were to rob a bank/. Those tips kept coming in for about six months. Our first tip was [?] that the outfit would be at San Angelo on a certain day to stick up the bank. On that day we were planted in San Angelo, but the bank at Eden was busted on that day. The next

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order came [directing?] us to be at Brownwood. On that day the bank at Brownwood was calculated to be busted, the bank at Coleman was robbed. The next order was that we should plant ourselves at Waso Waco and on that day the bank at Terrell recived the visit.

"We were trying to catch the gang in the act and get them in a bunch. We would be planted at different spots around the bank of a town and the roads leading into it.

"The tips were coming in from some member of the Bass gang and mostl likely it was Murphy. Captain McNally never admitted such, but did not/ make denial that it was murphy and Sam threatened to kill Murphy once claiming he was doing the tipping.

"Sam Bass was wise to the fact that some one was tipping off his plans and Sam was crossing the law, which was 10 shown by him always pulling a job at some point different from that which we calculated, but on the same day.

"Finally we were ordered to be a [Raound?] Rock, July [20th?], that was in 1878. The order was on a tip that the Bass gang would bust the bank there that day. I do not believe Round Rock was the town picked by the gang, because only three of the gang made a show. The three were Sam Bass, Bill (Jim) Jackson and Jim Burns. Burns was a cousin of mine and his father was a preacher. Jim joined the gang at Terrell and had not been with the gang long.

"My company of Rangers were at [Austin?] when the order was received. We left Austion at 2 [A.M.?] and arrived at Roundd Round Rock around 5 A.M. The Captain planted me at the N.E. corner of the square, next to a saloon and on the street leading to Austin. My orders were to watch for any of the Bass gang and report their movements and there was to no shooting until ordered. McNally wanted to get them in a bunch and take them all.

"The sun was just rising, when I spied three men on hosses riding into town. They reached the square and tied their hosses across from where I was planted. I reconized at once who

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the men were. Sam Bass I met him the first time in Camp Supply. Jim Burns, of course was my cousin. Bill Jackson was a stranger to me.

"They came across the street towards the saloon, next to which I was standing. As they came up to me, Bass and Burns reconized me and they stopped. Sam and Burns, each sez, "hello 11 Dave", and we went to chinning. I sez to them:

"You boys know me and what I am going now".

"Sure do, Dave", Sam sez, "come in and have a drink".

"Can't do it fellows, its against the orders", sez I, "What are you fellows doing here".

"Just jiggling through", sez Burns.

"Well, you had better duck". I sez to them. They turned to go into the saloon and Sam, looking back over his shoulder, laughed at me and sez, "Sorry old top your duties wont allow you to take a drink with a friend.

"They went into the saloon and they no more than had entered when a deputy sheriff came up to me and asked:

"'Who were them men that talked to you packing all that artillery?'

"Let's go in and get them" sez he.

"No", sez I, "My orders are to remain here and watch till I get further orders".

"Well, I am going in", sez he.

"I do [not?] recall the name of that deputy, it has plumb spilled my mind.

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"He entered the saloon and in a jiffy I heard one shot fired and the thud of a body hitting the floor. I became anxious to see the Captain and get action orders. It passed through my conk that hell was a-going to pop. I looked across the street, to the West, and there I saw McNally coming a-running like a streak carrying his hat in his hand. Dammed if McNally didn't run right past me with out a word and there I stood with 12 action already started. That deputy had jumped the game ahead of time and all we rangers were scattered.

"For a minute, or two, there was plenty of aritlery action. The shooting suddenly ceased and I saw Sam and his pals backing out of the saloon with their guns levelled, holding the crowd inside. They back across the street towards their hosses. I could see that Sam was in bad shape and when they reached their hosses Burns had to help Sam to mount. I could have pumped all of them full of lead, but I was still waiting for orders, not wanting to against the rule.

"When Sam mounted the boys in the saloon came running out, through door and windows. McNally came out first and yelled to take after them. Just as McNally spoke, Burns, instead of crawling under Sam's hoss to his own and stay protected, he started around the rear of Sam's hoss. As he pssed the hoss a shot felled him and he dropped between the two hosses. Jim Jackson, on his hoss, was at Sam's side [pronto?] and hooked his arm through Sam's and they were off with Jackson holding Sam onto the hoss. [From?] the moment that they started to mount their hosses till they were dragging down the road, consumed less time than it takes to tell about it. There were shots fired after them, but none seemed to hit.

"There were 211 of us Rangers and we pronto made our mounts and took after the three men. In addition there were others, some hankering to help and some wanted to get an eye full. There were folks in wagons pulled by mules and folks on hoss back all going down the road on a dead run. We rangers were in the lead and I looked back [?????] 13

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"We took him back to town and put him in a room over a drug store and he died early the next morning.

I was present when the doctor dressed the [wounds?] and there were 28 holes in him, all from his [wats?] [??] the Cherokee; and rush that I once read about.

"When we had dragged out twon about a mile and half, I saw Sam's hoss grazing off near the road. I sez to McNally, "there is Sam's hoss over [yonder?]. I'll go over and have a look." I went over there and under a black jack tree layed Sam, with his conk cover covering his face. I raised his lid and he turned his head, slightly, and looked at me and sez:

"Its you Dave".

"Yes Sam, its Dave", sez I.

"Well, they have done all they can. It wont be long till tis sez that I was killed". he sez.

" I can't help what has been done", sez I, "but I'll do all that I can for you. You should have ducked when you saw me, you knew what I was doing. There is Jackson.

"Don't worry about Jackson, he has too good a-hoss you [can't?] catch him", he sez, "I told him to go on [?] he could do me no good".

"We took him back to town put him in a room over a drug store and he died early the next morning.

"I was present when the doctor [????] there were 28 holes in him all [??] from shock and head. Not a vital organ been hit, [??] the loss of blood.

We tried to [?] him [??] low down on his raids, [??] just made [?] answer, he sez, 'Boys I am shut up like a clam.

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"Before he died he called McNally to him and sez," 14 "There is \$500, in my pocket take the money and my hoss and give both to the deputy's wife. I wont have any further use for either".

"Sam delt in hosses, especially racing stock and rode good critters. His ranch was located just about 20 miles North of Fort Worth, on the Denton [and?] Tarrant Counties line. It was known as the hiden pasture. The spot where the corral stood still shows signs of the old pen. I saw it a couple years ago.

"Now to get back in the cattle business. One time while I was working for the Duncan outfit, the dark lining was put into my cloud. Boss Robinson was making a drive of 4000 head of critters to Demming, New Mexico, and Duncan threw in with him. I was sent with Boss to look after Duncan's part. We were about half mile beyond the Pecos river and the cattle had [bedded?] on a flat near what was called [Nores?] Head Crossing. There was a mountain just beyond where we were camped and the trail led over it. After breakfast [Boss?] rode ahead to pick the trail and we were to start the cattle shortly. About half way up the mountain Indians had made a blind by cutting green brush. As Boss reached the spot, Indians concealled in the blind opened fire on him and he dropped off his hoss dead. The hoss turned quickly and came running back to camp. We could see the spot from where we were and watched the Indians cut Boss's leg, [arms?], and head off. Then they danced around him. We waddies were out numbered ten to one and did not dare to show into the open, because that would have been a sure way to get branded for the eternal range. The cutting and dancing act they put on was done 15 in the hopes we would get riled and come out in the open to fight them.

"we stayed huddled all that day and night, back of the chuck wagon and our hosses waiting for them to make a rush on us, but they respected our shooting ability and would not come out in the open. Four of the boys kept the cattle back, but were out of gun range. Nothing happened and the following morning, the waddies appointed Bob Pierce trail boss,

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he was among the best trail bosses that ever went down a trail. We delivered the cattle in full numbers as billed.

“What I have rattled covers the most important part of my range life. In the 80's I decided travel in double [harness?] and quit the range for a quiet life of a farmer and cattle buyer. [I?] located in Dallas County, and remained there until 10 years ago, then moved to Fort Worth.

“To finish the prattle I shall tell of the best rider I every met. That was John Hiskman, a negro. He put all of his active life, as far as I know, on the range. He lived to well past 110 years and died here in Forth Worth a few years ago. John could do anything on a hoss that any other man could and then some more. Also, ride wild steers.

“However, I saw him go into a spell off a steer one time. He was with the Waldrope outfit, located in Llano County, we were working a round-up and one day [got?] hold of a steer that was full of snake blood and Jon sez, “Hell boys that steer [?] wild, I can ride it an' hankerin' [he?] fo' to do it”.

“The idea was just in our mittens. I and a couple 16 of the waddies put a bunch of critters, along with the steer [t?] through the [shute?]. As the critters came through, John [?] the steer and pronto the animal evelated. Just as the steer went into the air one of the cows crowded into the steer, that put the animal off blance, also Hickman and they went into a spill. He fell in front of the cow and I am plumb loco, if the cow didn't [hook?] horn at him and it shot under his cartridge belt and when she raised her conk, there was John a-hanging from her horn. The animal seemed slightly agitated about it and began to swing from side to side, trying to throw John off. The cow having crooked horns caused that colored gentelman to stay with her. There he was swinging out in the air with his arms and legs working like a swimmer. He was considered a champion rider, but that time he established himself as the top yellor. He sure put out orders to be taken off that cow's

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horn. The matter was shaped up some what [pressing?], so we shot the cow. When John got all gathered up he sez," Lawd mighty, hows we all get messed up so?"

"Talking about Hickman's predicament, I recall a predicament George Grant, my cousin, got into with a buffalo. We came to [Earth?] County, to see me and he wanted the satisfaction of killing a buffalo. I took him out to find one and was not long in finding an old cow. He had a rifle and started shooting as soon as he sighted the animal, but his lead was falling way short. I [cloud?] see the balls hit the ground way short of his mark. I sez to him, "work up on her till you can get a good shot, the wind is in your favor", and he did. I 17 waited where we were and watched him work up towards the old cow and he finally stopped and took a shot. The cow dropped and he went a-running up to it. I noticed his walking around the critter and giving it the eye-ball and then suddenly up jumped the critter and was not in good humor. The animal made a dive for George. He had dropped his [?] was shooting at her with his six-gun aiming at the animals head, which was the only part he could shoot at. The animal kept coming and George side stepped it. The animal stopped, turned and came at him again and George kept shooting and side stepping until he used up all his cartridges, then he pulled his knife intending to cut the animal's ham strings as it passed him. Of course when I saw the show I started to George and by the time the two performers George was getting plumb tired, but had got one of the animals ham strings and that had slowed the critter down. I put a bullet back of it's shoulders and it tumbled over.

"A person can shoot at the front part of a buffalo's head all day with an ordinary gun and not do any more than raise the animals dander. They have a tuft of hair there and it gets matted with mud and [cuckleburrs?], then in addition they have a thick skull which, alone, takes a good gun to put lead through it. George didn't know that, but did know about the side stepping and that saved him.

"I have seen buffalo hides stacked as high as a house and in windrows a block long. The hunters would go into a herd and each shoot down about a hundred, then start skinning.

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18 The skinning was done with the help of a hoss. The skinner would cut the hide loose arounr the head, down and around the legs and down the belly and then hitch a hoss to the hide, with a man standing on the buffalo's head, the hoss was started and the hide would peel off in one pull. The job of skinning was done in a jiffy.

“In 1875-6, buffalo slaughter was in its [full?] swing. They were killed by the thousands and in five years the buffalo herds in Texas were reduced to a few in numbers. I have seen herds that were 20 miles, or more, wide and well over a 100 miles long. The buffalo were slaughtered for the hide and tallow. After the slaughter bone pickers traveled over the slaughter grounds and gathered the bones by the wagon loads. I have seen hundreds at the work.

“I want slight the brand blotter, so will prattle a little about them. During the time I was working on the range rustlers run in bunches and the [cowman?] had to “fit” them all the time. Hanging them where they were caught with stolen cattle was common.

“Most of my dealings with the brand blotters was while I was with the [Rangers?]. The worst battle I was in took place near Eden. They had a pen in a cedar [break?] and we jumped 10 of them there and run the boys 15 miles. They were making for a heavy timber and when we saw what they were up to Captain McNally sez, “If they make that timber we will lose them”.

“I can head them off, I reckon” sez I to him. “Do you want me to take the chance?” 19 “I know that you have a good hoss”, sez he, “but not good enough for that drag and you'll be branded sure as hell if you swing over to head them off”.

“I'll take the chance”, Sez I and I gave my hoss the gut hooks and in turn the hoss gave me all the speed it had. When they saw what I was calculating on doing, instead of branding me, they all bunched and got behind their hosses and there put up a fight.

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"For [15?] minutes there was hell [a-copping?] and when it was over there were only five of them left that could reach for the sky and [two?] rangers were dead.

"The following week, 20 miles from where we jumped the 10, we located 11 brand blotters hanging from trees at one place. That must have been a large [naturalization?] meeting. One of the parties had a note pinned on him and on it was written, "just cut me down and ask no questions".

"From [?] County, West was plenty tough. A person had to keep plenty of [gravle?] in his gizzard to stay with it.

"I am going to close this prattle by telling one on my self. It was when I was jumping around wrnagling hosses. I was near the Pecos river dragging to a ranch. It was just getting dark when suddenly there hopped along side of me a young fellow and sez to me:

"Where you headed for fellow?"

"Over yonder, about 20 miles," sez I.

"My name is Sorrel", sez he, "and we are looking for the law to be dragging this way pronto. When they/ hit we are 20 going to load them with lead. I reckon you better turn.

"Thank you fellow", sez I and turned my hoss back the way I came. I rode about two miles and stopped. There I let my hoss graze and waited to see if any thing would happen. I was there about 15 minutes when I herd the six-guns working. I circled the spot and went on about my business, because I calculated that I had no pumpkins to [roll?] in that section. I heard a report afterwards that indicated the young fellow did me a favor and knew what he was talking about.